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ABSTRACT

Tech prep is an alternative to the traditional college preparatory course of study. It is a 4-year sequence of study encompassing Grades 11 and 12 through 2 years of postsecondary occupational education culminating in a certificate or associate degree. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 is the catalyst for change in vocational-technical education in Michigan. The act authorizes projects and activities at the state and local levels under Title III, Tech Prep Education. Through funding provided by the Carl Perkins Act, Michigan has established tech prep consortia of educators, business, and labor. Efforts at formulating a tech prep curriculum for marketing education in Michigan incorporate Parnell's key design components (1975, 1985), which suggest a four-step process for establishing a tech prep program: conduct a program review, restructure curriculum in marketing education, establish articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary institutions, and implement a program. (YLB)

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Establishing a Tech Prep Curriculum for Marketing Education

Tech Prep for Marketing Careers Conference
Marketing Education Resource Center

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Restructuring Marketing Education Programs Through Action Plans

Background

Tech Prep is an alternative to the traditional college preparatory course of study. Tech Prep is a 4-year sequence of study beginning in the 11th year of high school through 2 years of postsecondary occupational education culminating in a certificate or associate degree. Preparation can be provided in at least one field of: engineering technology, applied science, mechanical, industrial or practical art or trade, agriculture, health or business.

Tech Prep prepares a student for a highly skilled technical occupation that allows either direct entry into the workplace as a qualified technician or continuation with further education leading to baccalaureate and advanced degrees. (U.S. Department of Education, 1992)

Both secondary education schools and community colleges are under increasing pressure to expand the quality and technical content of their curriculum to provide graduates who can fill the highly skilled technician jobs in our changing workforce. Our country needs better prepared workers to fill the technical jobs to keep America working. As Dr. Dale Parnell, President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, says that these current and future technicians

> ". . .will keep our planes flying, our water flowing, our electricity charging, our hospitals operating, our trains tracking, our computer clicking, our cars running, our laws enforced, and our goods and services sold in a society saturated at every level with technology and information." (Parnell, 1985)

Rapid advances in technology and heightened global economic competition demand increased technical skill levels of youth entering the workforce. Because many of our youth do not go on to college, the United States needs strategies beyond the boundaries of traditional schooling to provide them the knowledge and skills essential for building a world class workforce.

Aimed at students in high school, Tech Prep provides an option different from the college preparatory track only, which is designed to help students form a career goal in a technical occupation for which they begin preparation in high school and continue toward further specialization and an associate degree at a community college. While the student may be employable at an entry level into an occupation upon leaving high school, the associate degree will better prepare a student for mid-level positions in business/industry. The premise underlying Tech Prep is that a student who has a career goal, and with a support system to help reach that goal, is motivated to continue to learn. The key structure to implement Tech Prep is partnerships among schools, community colleges and business.

Tech Prep in Michigan

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 is a catalyst for change in vocational-technical education. The purpose of the law is:

1. To make the U.S. more competitive in the world economy, and
2. To develop a workforce with the skills needed to work in a technologically advanced society. The Perkins Act responds to the changing complexities of the workplace through Tech Prep education, a cornerstone of the new Law.

The Law authorizes projects and activities at the state and local levels under Title III, Tech Prep Education. As interpreted in Michigan, Tech Prep must occur in alignment with other in state educational reform initiatives such as Public Act 25 of 1990 which requires school improvement plans, accreditation reviews, annual educational reports and a core curriculum, and related efforts such as technology education, employability skills development, and applied academics. The premise underlying development of a Tech Prep program is that these components are integrated and linked together in a systematic manner. The outcome is a Tech Prep graduate who has acquired strong academic, interpersonal, and advanced technical skills leading to an associate degree or a two-year certificate.

Through funding provided by the Carl Perkins Law, Michigan has established Tech Prep consortiums of educators, business and labor to create a system of technical education beginning in middle or secondary school and culminating with an associated degree or two-year certificate that prepares youth and adult learners for entry into technical careers.

Each consortium must develop a systematic approach to technical education that encourages the entry of learners, supports their interests, provides a strong foundation of preparation for technical careers, and facilitates access into technical careers.

The system must identify minimum learning competencies for each program within an occupational cluster. Each cluster must have a sequence of learning that includes the pre-requisite competencies and the specialty, supportive, and general education course competencies for each certificate or associate degree.

Implementing a Tech Prep program for Marketing Education

According to Parnell, the key design components for implementing a Tech Prep program are that the program

1. Runs parallel with, does not replace, college-prep program
2. Combines common core of learning and technical education
3. Rests on foundation of basic proficiency in math, science, communications, and technology
4. Presents content in applied settings
5. Occurs in grades 11, 12, 13, and 14
6. Incorporates a structured and closely coordinated curriculum
7. Builds around career clusters and technical system study

Our efforts at formulating a Tech Prep curriculum for marketing education in Michigan incorporates the above key design components and suggests a four step process for establishing a Tech Prep program as follows:

Step #1: Conduct a Program Review
Step #2: Restructure Curriculum in Marketing Education
Step #3: Establish Articulation Agreements between secondary and post secondary institutions
Step #4: Implement a Tech Prep program

Conduct a Program Review

Michigan has undertaken a state-wide effort to restructure career and technical education programs. The specific purposes of this restructuring is to change program content and delivery to assure that all learners interested in pursuing a career area:

1) Become involved in learning and/or applying a "core" of necessary foundation skills drawn from mathematics, science, and communications along with transferable occupational skills common to a number of employment opportunities.

2) Be provided expanded opportunities to develop employ-ability skills, an awareness of entrepreneurship, and practice in applying teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership knowledge and skills.

3) Be provided specialized areas of technical instruction built upon the "core" content at either or both the secondary and postsecondary levels.

4) Be provided instruction that is competency based, learner outcome focused, and flexible in design.

5) Have access to those programs and services needed to make the transition from high school to further education and/or work with an emphasis given to increasing the quantity and quality of services to economically disadvantaged and handicapped learners.

The process for restructuring Michigan's marketing education program involves three basic components:

1) Conducting a self-review and program review using Program Standards of Quality.

2) Developing an Action Plan for local use.

3) Submitting an Action Plan Summary Report to the Michigan Department of Education Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) for approval.

The process is designed to provide flexibility for implementation over a multi-year period and is instructor intensive to achieve appropriate real change--not just change on paper.

The use of program standards and actions provide the necessary direction for restructuring programs to meet present and future needs of learners, provide a means for systemtically reviewing, planning, and obtaining support for implementing program improvement, and provide a basis for communicating strengths and needs relating to the program to administrators, parents, other marketing educators, advisory committees, and the Department of Education.

Program Standards for Michigan Marketing Education programs are up-to-date statements of validated program criteria which reflect a standard of desirability against which current educational practices and outcomes can be measured. The standards were adapted from the "Standards for Excellence in Marketing Education, 1987" and North Central Accreditation's criteria.

Ten steps have been identified by Michigan Marketing Educators in order to restructure marketing education programs through developing an action plan:

1. File commitment form
2. Collect support data
3. Conduct self-review
4. Identify review team
5. Organize review
6. Bring in review team
7. Develop strategies for improvement
8. Complete action plans
9. complete action plan summary report
10. Forward reports

A change in CIP codes (from 08.0700 to 08.0799) and funding will be implemented by the Michigan Department of Education upon submission of an approved Action Summary Report. The many strategies proposed by the local school program may not implemented at the time of approval; a local program will have two years to fully implement the changes needed to establish the restructured program.

Restructuring Curriculum in Marketing Education

> "Many technical and leadership skills, applied knowledge, and attitudes learned in vocational-technical education are transferable to a broad array of occupations. This provides the basis for designing articulated curricula, which are structured with a board base leading to specialization for those planning to enter employment upon completion of high school as well as those planning to enroll in postsecondary advance occupational preparation." (Marketing Education Cluster Guide, 1991)

The formal process of restructuring Marketing Education programs in Michigan started in 1990, but efforts have been ongoing since 1984 with the introduction of the National Curriculum Framework by the National Council of Marketing Education. Marketing programs are shifting their focus on preparing students for jobs requiring entry-level skills, primarily in retailing, to providing the skills and concepts needed for upward mobility. Programs and curricula are being expanded to serve employment in entrepreneurship, professional sales, with a focus on marketing careers.

Tech Prep curriculum can be designed to accommodate every student in a high school, or directed to serve a group of students in a single

occupational area, i.e., marketing. Marketing Educators are in a position to quickly adapted their programs to Tech Prep.

The following are steps that will position Marketing Education programs to serve students for entering a marketing occupation or entrepreneurial venture, or to continue their education after high school:

Create a clustered instructional program. Narrow, job-specific, training should be replaced with a wide range of instruction including foundational skills, marketing functions and application, career competency development, management and entrepreneurial development, and expose students to as many career opportunities in marketing.

Make instruction competency-based. Identify what skills, concepts, and attitudes employees need in marketing and organize your course and instruction around these desired outcomes. But do not reinvent the wheel, MarkED can provide competency records and custom curriculum outlines that local employers, labor, and community representatives can adapt and/or adopt. MarkED uses the DACUM process with marketing employers and employees; this assures the following:

1) MarkED's competencies are not just performance based; concepts and attitudes necessary for success in marketing careers are included. This makes MarkED curriculum outcomes based.

2) MarkED's competencies incorporate both employer expectation for future employment and preparation for ongoing education.

3) MarkED's competencies are "leveled" to match Tech Prep's basic core (foundation), technical (functions), and specialty (occupational unique).

4) MarkED's competencies are matched to levels, creating cores for each level; this creates a "logical sequence" for dividing lines for secondary and postsecondary articulation.

Michigan organized a DACUM panel of Michigan employers to validate the MarkED competencies for general marketing; and incorporated the findings into the Marketing Education Curriculum Guide.

Learn to teach differently. Marketing educator have to learn to manage their instructional programs in order to serve all students interested in marketing careers. Structuring the delivery of marketing to specific courses or outcomes only established barriers for students whose career plans do not match the course design objectives. Marketing educators, at both the secondary and post secondary level, must utilize competency-based instruction techniques and become the learning manager of the marketing education program.

MarkED's National Model Program instructors, and Michigan's Model Program instructors, are putting into practice the techniques that allows programs to serve the needs of all students.

Focus on marketing. If the marketing curriculum is integrated--i.e. the competencies identified for success in marketing are delivered throughout the curriculum and at all levels, there will be more efficient use of student time and the elimination of unnecessary duplication. A focus on marketing means that 1) marketing competencies must be articulated between the high school and postsecondary to avoid duplication, and 2) foundation skills that are not unique to marketing occupations should become the content of other applied courses.

Marketing programs combined with integrated courses will assure that students are preparing both for employment and for continuing education.

Establishing Articulation Agreements

An articulated curriculum is a requirement for establishing a Tech Program in marketing education. After a thorough program review and the identification of competencies and tasks at each level of employment marketing instructors are able to communicate their curriculum to others and to begin the articulation process. The articulation process has been defined as the total effort of educational groups and individuals to discover, establish, and continually improve relationships between policies, plans, procedures, programs, and people. (MI State Board of Education, 1975). The articulation process should lead to the establishment of formalized agreements between the secondary and post secondary institutions in an area to offer Tech Prep marketing education program based upon providing students with a nonduplicative sequence of progressive achievement leading to advanced competencies.

Programs based on tasks enable students to find out in advance what will be expected of them at each level of instruction. Students are able to identify what tasks and competencies they already possess and/or need in order to prepare for a career sustaining job or a more advanced position in the field of marketing, as they continue their education.

Competency-based curricula helps instructors to structure their learning experiences. Post secondary marketing instructors can match tasks identified with a specific level of employment to courses and organize

their learning activities around these tasks. Secondary instructors can select tasks that will prepare their students with career sustaining skills that are performed in an occupational area within marketing. Advanced secondary students can select higher level tasks at the career specialist, supervisor, or manager-owner levels to receive advanced placement credit at a post secondary institution.

Task level curriculum articulation meets the needs of today's society. It reduces costs of education, saves students time and money, provides instructors with a curriculum management system, and brings trained people into the labor market.

Implementing A Tech Prep Program

After a thorough program review, the establishment of a restructured curriculum, and formalized articulation agreements the Tech Prep curriculum in marketing education is ready for implementation. Successful implementation depends on dedicated local leadership, effective guidance and counseling, instructors at both the secondary and post secondary institutions which are involved with the effort, and state level support for the effort.

Implementation of a Tech Prep curriculum in marketing education has to depend upon effective local leadership. Communication between the secondary and post secondary marketing instructor(s) must occur and be formalized through regular contact, communication, and meetings. Local marketing instructors must regularly communicate in turn with their vocational director, building principals, or occupational deans about periodic progress and successes. An agreed upon evaluation method or strategy should be develop to measure both product and process elements

for the Tech Prep delivery. Local instructors must also design a public relations plan to inform, students, parents, the general public and business/industry about the benefits of a Tech Prep curriculum in marketing education.

Students enrolled in secondary marketing education must receive guidance and counseling services informing them about the Tech Prep curriculum. Marketing instructors should not assume that students see the long-term implications regarding their decision to study marketing or that they see the "big picture" in relation to future education or employment opportunities. Time should be allocated within the instructional program in high school for self-awareness, exploration, and career planning. Students should be directly shown how their coursework (both academic and marketing instruction) in high school will prepare them for a various occupations within the field of marketing. Marketing instructors must directly communicate with parents about the goals, intent, and benefits of the Tech Prep curriculum. Instructors should also use their local program advisory committee to inform other business leaders about the program.

State level support for the Tech Prep curriculum is also essential for successful implementation. The consultant or team of consultants for marketing education at the state level must encourage all secondary instructors to work with community colleges in their area to establish Tech Prep programs for marketing education. As part of this efforts workshops, in-service seminars and periodic mailings should be sponsored to inform marketing instructors of the benefits of a Tech Prep program for marketing education. Technical assistance should also be provide to institutions desiring to establish a Tech Prep program.

Conclusions

Marketing educators have a vital role designing curriculum and systems to serve all students for employment and continuing education. Starting with designing curriculum that is based upon competencies verified by the marketing field, and creating a marketing education cluster that exposes students to a wide assortment of career opportunities, including continuing education, marketing education has the resources and personnel to work with business/industry, community, schools, counselors, and parents to create marketing career opportunities for students.

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MARKETING EDUCATION CLUSTER PROGRAM OVERVIEW